

# ABCs of Health

## Tobacco

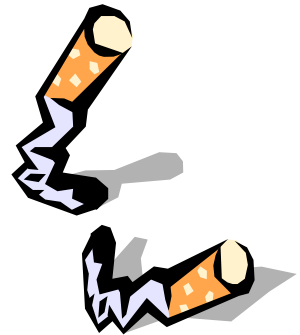


### AWARENESS...

- Quitting tobacco use is the best thing you can do for your health. Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and death. Each year it snuffs out more lives than AIDS, illegal drugs, alcohol, fires, car accidents, murders and suicides combined. In fact, one Texan will die from smoking in the next 22 minutes.

Using tobacco will **affect** your body in many ways.  
For example, it will:

- **Increase** your **heart rate** 15-50 beats per minute faster than normal;
- **Raise** your **blood pressure** by 10-20 points;
- Contribute to **hardening** of the **arteries**;
- **Reduce** the **oxygen** level in your blood.



#### Negative consequences of Tobacco use\*\*:

- **Acute risks**: shortness of breath, impotence, exacerbation of asthma, infertility, harm to pregnancy, more susceptible to colds and bronchitis.
- **Long-term risks**: heart attack and stroke; cancers of the lung, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, bladder, cervix, emphysema; need for extended care.
- **Environmental risks**: lung cancer and heart disease in spouses; asthma, middle ear disease, SIDS, respiratory infections and low birth weight in children; children who smoke.

Using tobacco during **pregnancy** may have serious side effects on the baby, such as low birth-weight, nicotine addiction, stillborn, SIDS, and possible premature birth. If you already have children, they are twice as likely to become smokers if you smoke.



# BEHAVIOR...

## Benefits of Quitting Tobacco:



- **You will look better.** Your skin will be less likely to wrinkle early. Your teeth and fingers will no longer be stained. Your breath will smell better.
- **You will feel better.** You'll breathe easier and feel more energetic. You will be able to smell and taste things better.
- **You will set a good example.** Friends and family will see you as a role model. You'll protect your family from dangerous secondhand smoke.
- **You will lower your risk of disease.** Your risk of having heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting smoking and your risk of having a stroke is reduced to that of a non-smoker after 5-15 years.\*

Set a **"Quit Date"** and stick to it!

# CHANGE...

Today is the **best day** for you to become tobacco-free. There are different methods to quit tobacco. One method requires medication. **Ask your health care provider** about this option.



You can quit by yourself, or through a program designed to help tobacco users quit. For more information about these programs, call your local office of the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association, or ask your health care provider. Your local health department may also be a great resource to help you quit using tobacco.

Quitting tobacco use is not easy. The American Cancer Society operates a free telephone service with trained counselors to help you. Call the QUITLINE 1-877-YES-QUIT (1-877-937-7848). Each year over **2 million people successfully quit!**

**Contact** the Texas Department of State Health Services, Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control at 800-345-8647 or [www.dshs.state.tx.us/tobacco](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/tobacco) for more information on any topic related to tobacco use.

\*Clinician's Handbook of Preventive Services, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

\*\*National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

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